September Song by botanicapoetica

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Summary:

Title taken from the song of the same name by Agnes Obel, which is a beautiful song and should be listened to.

September Song

Author's Note:

> Welcome to the pain train and my foray into this pairing that begs for h/c.

Steve had thought the game had gone decently that night. Nothing stellar, but he and Billy were reaching a better, less macho understanding on the court. This was largely the result of Billy actually apologizing to Steve one day before science. Likely spurred by having a bat filled with nails slammed in front of his dick. Well, beggars can't be choosers, and Steve would say his relationship with Billy had reached some sort of shaky truce.

His feelings on the game tonight seemed to be shared by Billy, who he could overhear talking to his father and step-mother while walking them to their car. "Pretty cool free throw in the middle there, right? I wiped the floor with those bozos." Billy said with an unusually pure sounding pride, walking with his usual swagger, ridiculously accentuated by the fact that he was wearing no shirt under his leather jacket and still had on those stupid basketball shorts. Not that that was what Steve was paying attention to. He had something else to pay attention to right now, and that was the low and decidedly aggressive tone from Mr. Hargrove.

"All I saw out there was a slop who acted like his shit didn't stink. Susan and I could've been out having a nice dinner right now. No, instead I decide to trust you for once, let you bring me out to see all the hard work you say you've been doing. I'm not sure why I'm surprised by the disappointment, but-", Neil was saying, but was interrupted by his son who threw his arms out. "Are you fucking kidding me? You know I've been working my ass off with practice every week!" Billy interjected, and Steve was surprised by the response that followed.

With a hand closing in a bruising grip on Billy's jaw, Neil stood nearly nose to nose with his son, speaking in a dark and hushed tone that Steve had to desperately strain to hear. "Don't you. Ever. Interrupt me. Again. And don't even think about inviting us out for

another waste of a night until you decide to take something seriously." And with that, his grip left Billy's face and his car left the parking lot, a quiet and embarrassed Susan in tow. Billy's hands clenched at his sides and shook, his back now to Steve. He decided to walk a few paces closer, about to try for a casual interjection into whatever hurricane Billy was creating, when wild eyes whipped around to face him, daring him to say anything.

"What're you doing out here, Harrington? Spying on me like some fucking loser? Get lost." Billy's tone of voice was a far cry from the genuine confidence he'd heard only moments ago, moments before Neil. For all that he was clearly trying to sound as menacing as usual, there was something wobbly about it, not quite as whole as it should've been. Steve put his hands up, not all that interested in round two with Billy fucking Hargrove, and started to walk over to his car. At this point there were barely a handful of cars left in the school parking lot, and Steve wondered where he'd end up going tonight, if he'd end up at Tommy's like he assumed everyone else did. The loud slamming of Billy's car door shook him out of his thoughts, his eyes warily traveling to the place he'd been banished from looking.

Billy was staring straight ahead, his body vibrating, and he suddenly lifted his fists to punch his steering wheel. But not just once or twice. The blonde started pummeling the wheel, his right fist deciding to start punching his own leg instead. Steve could hear Billy screaming in anger, could see his curls flying everywhere. He could practically feel static hatred filling the air around him, air filled with danger. But somehow this time, Steve knew it wasn't danger for him. This must have been why he suddenly found his legs propelling him forward, closer and closer to Billy's car. With an uncomfortable punch in his chest he heard the words Billy was screaming.

"STUPID! STUPID! YOU PIECE OF SHIT. YOU WEAK LITTLE FUCK. WHAT THE FUCK IS WRONG WITH YOU, FUCK YOU, FUCK YOU…" was all Steve needed to hear before he wrenched open the passenger seat of Billy's car with his arms very slightly reaching out, consequences be damned. Steve grabbed on to Billy's right arm to halt his assault, noticing the top of his leg had already gone a deeper red. "Hargrove, come on. Come on, stop it. Billy." Steve barked,

hoping to whoever was up there that he wasn't about to get his face caved in. Billy's eyes turned on him, wilder than before but rimmed with red, his cheeks drenched with tears. Billy's face seemed to collapse on itself for a moment before he quickly attempted to recover with the familiarity of rage. It was a half-assed attempt, and he could've ripped his arm out of Steve's grip easy as pie but was only uselessly shaking it in his grip. Steve used this opportunity to move his hand up to the back of Billy's neck, gently squeezing in an attempt to ground him out of whatever fucking maelstrom he was roiling in.

Billy flinched at the touch but didn't pull away, staring at Steve, eyes shining in the poorly lit light of his car. He was still vibrating, but this time it seemed to be a precursor to something about to bust open. His face began to collapse again, and after a few aborted attempts to right his expression his despair had other ideas. Steve watched as Billy crumpled in on himself, looking small for the first time ever in Steve's eyes, these horrible noises coming out of him. He didn't try to fight Steve, he didn't scream at him, he just kept making these fearful animal noises littered with small "why"s pouring out involuntarily.

Steve had no answers, no easy fix for what he'd seen, and he felt like a total asshole. But he figured this had to be better than nothing. Just one person to offer this quiet moment. It had to be better than nothing.